

# Africa Day, 25 May

## A resource-book for educators

Africa Day is the anniversary of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

To understand the meaning of that event it is necessary to go back to the four centuries of slavery; then to recall the hundred years and more of direct colonialism; and with that background, to look once again upon the neo-colonialism of today.

The OAU was set up more than 50 years ago to combat neo-colonialism. Today's learners come into a world where neo-colonialism still prevails. Africa Day is an occasion to celebrate our history and our continental identity. It is also an occasion to problematise, and to rededicate ourselves to solving the fundamental problems of Africa as we find them to be.

## Part 1

# Modern Slavery and its Revolutionary Literature

Africa's historical and revolutionary literature, like the condition of the continent today, arose out of modern slavery. This slavery was not an ancient, natural affliction, from which humanity was to be delivered by natural progress. Nor was it abolished by charity, or by luck, one and a half centuries ago.



**The Triangular Trade, C. 1400-1800**

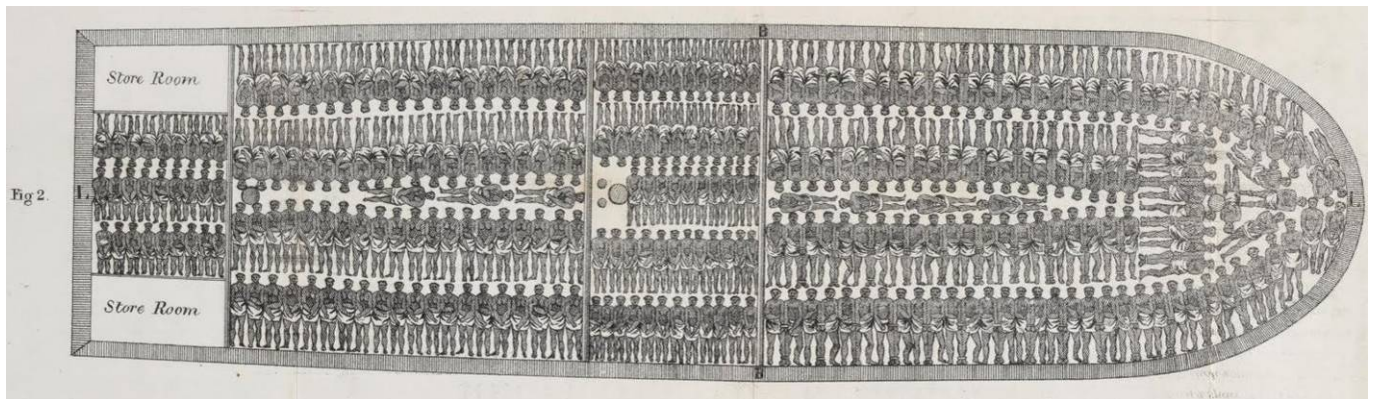
Slavery was inflicted upon Africa, by Western Europe, in the modern era. Africa still bears strong marks of it today, and so does Europe. It was a quite distinct and different kind from the ancient slavery of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon.

Modern slavery arose from the very first, and the many subsequent, voyages of the Portuguese during the time of Henry the Navigator. Within ten years of the 1434 breakthrough voyage, slaves were being shipped out of Africa. This was also the time of the High Renaissance in Italy. Europe reached forward for humanism and backwards to brutality in the same historical moment.

Vulgarised Marxism would say that slavery is primitive, and moves on to feudalism, after which feudalism moves to capitalism, in a simple, linear progression. But this was not, historically, what happened.

The Atlantic slave trade, plus the related slave economies of Indonesia and the Cape of Good Hope, formed the dominant global economic system for centuries.

The owning class was bourgeois, but not capitalist. The same bourgeois class also invented capitalism (wage slavery); but four hundred years were to pass before, in the US Civil War, modern chattel slavery was at last abolished. Bourgeois capitalism could not eventually abide bourgeois slavery, and annihilated it. But the legacy of four centuries of industrialised slavery remains, because it formed the world system.



**Slave ship layout**

Out of the last six centuries of African history, four of them have been dominated by this most degraded form of human behaviour, imposed upon Africa by Europeans. Capitalist Imperialism (colonialism and neo-colonialism) has not yet lasted even half as long as the dominance of slavery did.

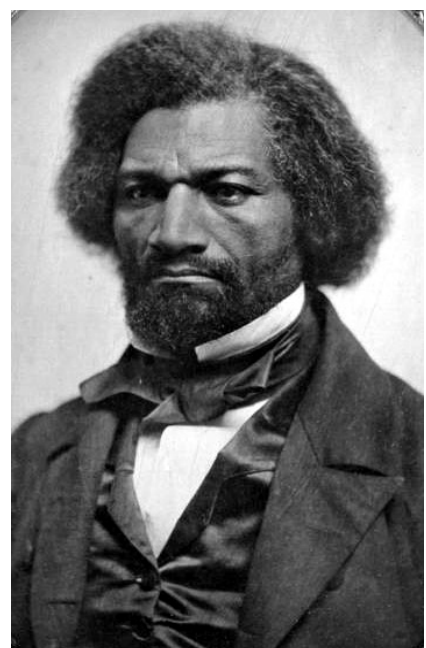
During the period of the global dominance of slavery systems were developed which were part of the preconditions of capitalist commodity production and trading. Some of these were: letters of credit and other forms of banking; insurance; stock exchanges and commodity markets; bonds and futures. A full suite of financial services was constructed, that was later put at the disposal of slavery's capitalist successors. This blood-sucking slave-born European financial system still survives.



**W. E. B. Du Bois, 1868 - 1963**



**Paul Robeson, 1898-1976**



**Frederick Douglass, 1818 - 1895**

The historic switch from chattel slavery to liberal capitalism was the occasion of the dawning of African revolutionary literature. The on-going revolutionary literature laid the basis for the today's continental liberation movement.

Hence the story of African revolution begins with, and must continue to include, the revolutionary literature of the African "diaspora".

Not only modern, colonised and neo-colonised Africa, but also capitalism itself as a dominant system, was born at the demise of the modern slavery. Capitalism was the continuance of the slave-system, in its new form of colonialism.

In the study of Africa, Europe appears as if in a mirror. The appearance of Europe, as it is now, cannot be explained without a good knowledge of Africa, its counterpart.

The greatest of the early writers was Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895, born in the same year as Karl Marx, and deceased in the same year as Frederick Engels. It was Douglass who wrote: "Power concedes nothing without a demand", and: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

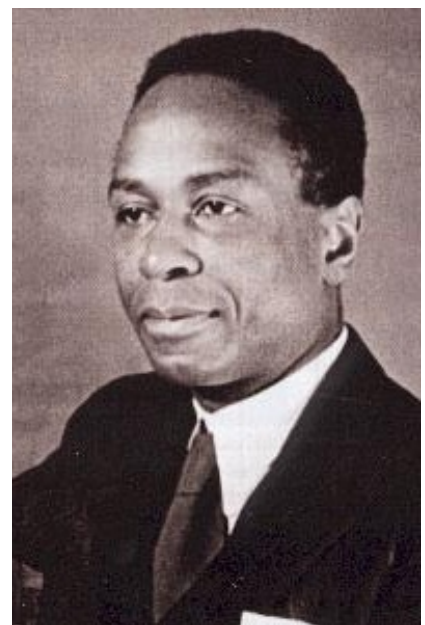
The bridge between Frederick Douglass and the liberation movements of our lifetimes is W. E. B. Du Bois, who was born in 1868, in the USA and died in 1963, in independent, post colonial Ghana.



**C L R James, 1901-1989**



**Alphaeus Hunton, 1903-1970**



**George Padmore, 1903 - 1959**

George Padmore was born in Trinidad, in the West Indies. After studying in the USA he spent four or five years in the Soviet Union in the Communist International of Labour Unions (Profintern). Padmore organised an International Conference of Negro

Workers in Hamburg, Germany on July 7-8, 1930. South Africans W Thibedi and Moses Kotane were elected to Padmore's Executive Committee at this conference.

In London from 1934, Padmore teamed up with his contemporary and fellow-Trinidadian C L R James, forming the International African Services Bureau.



**Walter Sisulu, 1912-2003**



**E S Reddy**



**Yusuf Dadoo, 1909-1983**

Meanwhile, in the USA, Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Alphaeus Hunton and others created the Council on African Affairs (CAA). It became the leading voice of anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism in the United States, until it was suppressed in 1953. Through the good offices of Mr E S Reddy, crucial correspondence took place between the CAA leaders and ANC leaders including Yusuf Dadoo, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki.

### **Pan-African Congress, 1945**

Padmore organised the famous 5th Pan-African Congress, in Manchester, England, in 1945. It was attended, among others, by Kwame Nkrumah, W E B Du Bois, Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

After Ghanaian independence in 1957, Padmore moved, like Du Bois and Hunton, to the new African republic to serve under Nkrumah, but he died in 1959. Hunton moved on to Zambia, editing the ANC magazine "Mayibuye" until his death in 1970.

In 1960, sometimes called the "Year of Africa", 17 more nations joined Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Ghana, Sudan and some others. These were followed by more countries until on 25 May, 1963, 30 independent countries out of 32 formed the OAU

The inspiration of the OAU and its principle of pan-Africanism (the unity of all continental Africa) was associated with du Bois, Padmore and comrades such as Alphaeus Hunton and Paul Robeson. But most strongly of all it was identified with Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, as remains the case to this day.

This part has been to demonstrate the origins, and the continuity, of pan-Africanism.



Kwame Nkrumah, 1909 - 1972

## Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is one of the very greatest of the African Revolutionary writers, as well as being the independence leader and the first democratic president of his country, Ghana.

In the same year as the founding of the OAU, Dr Nkrumah published his book “Africa Must Unite”, and two years later, in 1965, published a masterpiece: “Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism”.

In this book, Nkrumah defined neo-colonialism as follows:

*“The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”*

He went on to add:

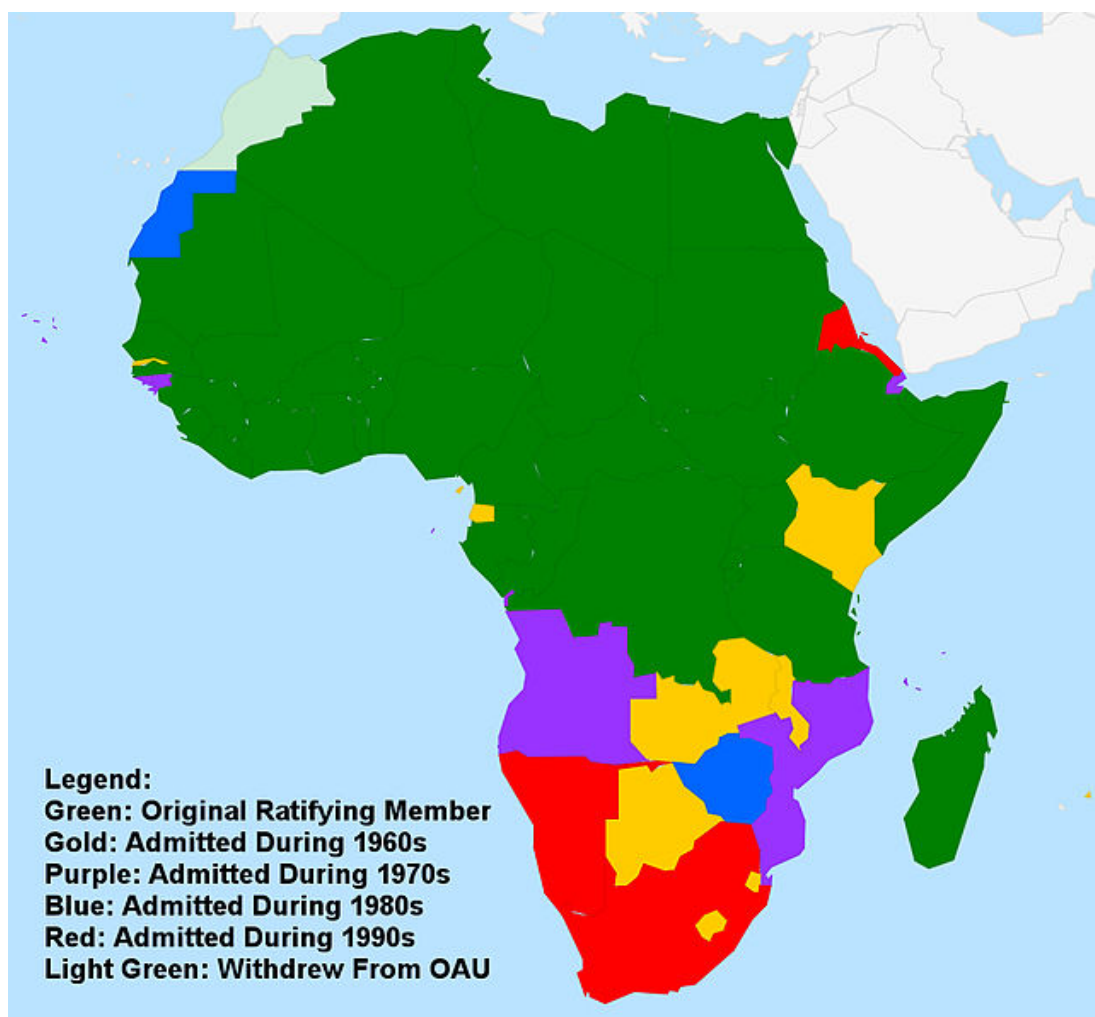
*“Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad.”*

At the conclusion of “Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism” Nkrumah wrote:

*“I have set out the argument for African unity and have explained how this unity would destroy neo-colonialism in Africa. In later chapters I have explained how strong is the world position of those who profit from neo-colonialism.*

*“Nevertheless, African unity is something which is within the grasp of the African people. The foreign firms who exploit our resources long ago saw the strength to be gained from acting on a Pan-African scale. By means of interlocking directorships, cross-shareholdings and other devices, groups of apparently different companies have formed, in fact, one enormous capitalist monopoly. The only effective way to challenge this economic empire and to recover possession of our heritage, is for us also to act on a Pan-African basis, through a Union Government.”*

In 1966, the year following the publication of this revolutionary book, while he was on a visit to China and Vietnam, Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown as President in a military *coup d'état* organised by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).



The OAU, founded on 25 May 1963 (Wikipedia)

*PAFMECA, PAFMECSA and the*

## **OAU, 1963**

In 1958 among the East African countries, and under the special leadership of Julius Nyerere, called “Mwalimu” (Teacher), an organisation was formed called “PAFMECA” Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa.

Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo left South Africa in 1960, following the Sharpeville Massacre. In February 1962 they attended a meeting of PAFMECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In that meeting PAFMECA became PAFMECSA – Pan-African Freedom Movement of East, Central and South Africa – one of the main forerunners of the OAU, which was formed the following year, also in Addis Ababa



**Mandela and Tambo at PAFMECSA, Addis Ababa, 1962**

Other prior formations were the “Casablanca” and the “Monrovia” blocs, one relatively more federalist, the other more pan-African. All of these were brought together in Addis Ababa in 1963, when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed. The OAU was a standard-bearer for independence, national sovereignty, and support for the on-going liberation struggles of Southern Africa.



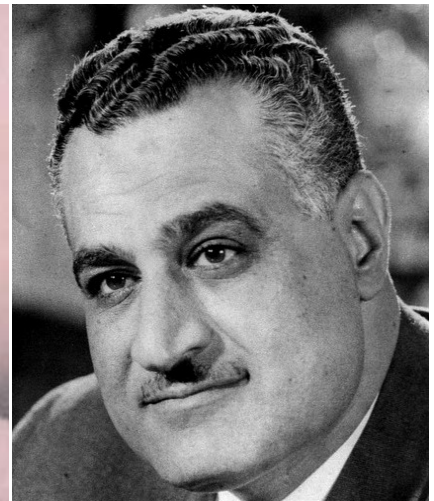
**Ras Tafari, Haile Selassie 1**



**Julius Nyerere**



**Diallo Telli**  
(First OAU Secretary-General)



**Gamal Abdel Nasser**

**Above: Some of the founders of the OAU**

The OAU continued to serve in the form that it was founded until the end of the liberation struggle against direct colonialism, with relatively minor exceptions.

These are Western Sahara and some small islands and enclaves that are still held by European powers. Full African Unity is also no closer.

The conversion of the OAU into the AU in 2002 overturned the principle of independence and national sovereignty, and introduced the possibility of intervention by states in the affairs of other state members of the organisation.

# Independence

Before the OAU there was oppression, going all the way back to the beginning of the days of slavery. After the OAU there is the AU of today, with all of the problems that it has. Approaching the OAU, and during its existence (1963 to 2002), great history was made. This was the independence struggle, of which the OAU was a consequence, and for which it was created to support, and to continue. South Africa's first universal-franchise election in 1994 was the high point of this period.

Each country has its specific circumstances, history, personalities, problems, class structure, and class dynamics. In Africa, by now, there are 54 fully-made nation states and ten remaining colonies. In South America, for comparison, there are twelve fully-made nation-states and one colony. There can be no question of stereotyping.

To comprehend the African liberation struggle in total is, for this reason, a special challenge. It requires a historical perspective, combined with at least a sampling of the detail. It requires a feeling for the revolutionary literature, such as books, pamphlets, speeches, articles and radio broadcasts that have informed the great revolutionary tide of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that touched all African countries.



**Eduardo Mondlane**



**Frantz Fanon**

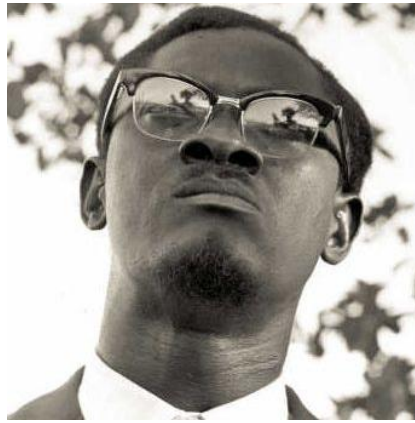


**Amilcar Cabral**

A careful selection of the authentic and characteristic African revolutionary literature can assist. The list of 38 authors below may help. It includes varied and even contradictory texts. From it we can take a smaller sample, so as to make a start. Who are the greatest of the African revolutionary writers? Without offering a conclusive answer to that question, yet we can take Amilcar Cabral, Eduardo Mondlane and Frantz Fanon as being in the front ranks. Patrice Lumumba (for his Independence Day speech), Govan Mbeki and Walter Rodney are contenders.



**Walter Rodney**



**Patrice Lumumba**



**Govan Mbeki**

Let us also take Ngugi wa Thiongo, Aimé Césaire and Chief Luthuli, so as to indicate the breadth and depth of this African revolutionary literature.



**Chief Albert Luthuli**



**Ngugi wa Thiongo**



**Aimé Césaire**

Here is a mixed list of influential writers:

Samir	<b>Amin</b>	Govan	<b>Mbeki</b>
Ahmed	<b>Ben Bella</b>	Eduardo	<b>Mondlane</b>
Steve	<b>Biko</b>	Gamal Abdel	<b>Nasser</b>
Amilcar	<b>Cabral</b>	Augustinho	<b>Neto</b>
Aimé	<b>Césaire</b>	Huey P	<b>Newton</b>
Angela	<b>Davis</b>	Kwame	<b>Nkrumah</b>
Cheikh Anta	<b>Diop</b>	'Mzala'	<b>Nxumalo</b>
Frederick	<b>Douglass</b>	Julius	<b>Nyerere</b>
W E B	<b>Du Bois</b>	George	<b>Padmore</b>
Frantz	<b>Fanon</b>	Sol	<b>Plaatje</b>
Ruth	<b>First</b>	Paul	<b>Robeson</b>
Muammar	<b>Gaddafi</b>	Walter	<b>Rodney</b>
C L R	<b>James</b>	Thomas	<b>Sankara</b>
Martin Luther	<b>King</b>	Ousmane	<b>Sembène</b>
Moses	<b>Kotane</b>	Issa	<b>Shivji</b>
Alex	<b>La Guma</b>	Oliver	<b>Tambo</b>
Patrice	<b>Lumumba</b>	Ngugi wa	<b>Thiongo</b>
Albert	<b>Luthuli</b>	'l'Ouverture'	<b>Toussaint</b>
Mahmood	<b>Mamdani</b>	Malcolm	<b>X</b>

## The AU, 2002

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with direct colonialism almost eradicated from the earth, including Africa, a counter-current to independence appeared.

This reaction against the idea of the sovereign national state undoubtedly serves Imperialism. It goes by many names, including “Globalisation” and “Neo-Liberalism”, developing into the “Responsibility to Protect” and “Humanitarian Intervention”.

This was the period, following the fall of the Soviet Union, and before the rise of independent power in Russia and China that became more conspicuous in the second decade of the century. In this period, the idea of the “Washington Consensus” and the “New World Order”, that was called “unipolar”, was in vogue.

African leaders, including in particular President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, became willing promoters of this new ideology. They led a movement to convert the OAU from being a defender of independence, national sovereignty and anti-Imperialism, to being a vehicle for the new global hegemony of the United States of America, as it was expected to be.

They thought that they were being realistic, and that the designs put before them were in good faith, and beneficial. Accordingly they created a “peer-review mechanism” and created the means, and even the obligation, within the AU treaty that superseded the OAU one, for states to intervene in other states’ affairs, when it was thought that states had misbehaved.

This AU was enacted in 2002. It included all of the states of the former OAU. It celebrates the founding of the OAU as its special day, but the AU is not the OAU.

By now, it is clear that the African Peer-Review Mechanism has fallen into abeyance. Some interventions by African troops have occurred, but these are entirely subordinated to overseas control. In the Central African Republic, South African troops were chased out by the former colonial powers. In other cases, African interventions have not even been considered, but European troops have been sent as a first resort. An example of this is the conflict in Mali.

The AU’s new African Parliament has become a charade in these circumstances. Situated in Midrand, South Africa, it is paid for by Western donors. It has no principles of Pan-Africanism or of anti-Imperialism to guide it. It is nothing but an expensive, foreign-funded NGO think-tank. It cannot even be called a platform, because nobody pays attention to it.

## **“The Empire”: From Yugoslavia to Libya**

The fall of the Soviet Union was already followed, in the 1990s, by an outbreak of war in Europe, the first since 1945. The historic non-aligned state of Yugoslavia was crushed and dismantled. The flagrant outburst of the new “Empire”, unfolding at the time that the new AU was being prepared, could be seen in Afghanistan. The Imperialists began bombing and invading that country in 2001 and have continued to make war there. The first and second Iraq wars created untold destruction.

The pretext for supporting a new, revised AU was prevention of war in the new circumstances of the world. Unfortunately it was based on a misconception of these circumstances. Imperialism is of its own necessity a period of eternal war.

It is the case of Libya, destroyed in 2011, that is the most conclusive from the African point of view. It proves that nothing has changed, the danger is still present, and the struggle must continue in the old, anti-Imperialist way. “Responsibility to Protect” and “Humanitarian Intervention” are only lies, deception and cover for war.

Libya had been the first African country to achieve independence after the Second World War, in 1945. It had been the first to achieve a standard of living that was the equal of, or better than, the average standard of living in the European countries on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.

Politically, Libya had been one of the most advanced and leading countries within the OAU, and in African politics altogether up to that time.

## **Sudan**

The case of Sudan, broken up in 2011 (the same year as the destruction of Libya and the beginning of the attempted regime-change in Syria), proves the wisdom of the OAU founders, and the foolishness of the AU revisions of 2002.

The break-up of Sudan has led to civil war in South Sudan, as well as potential war between the two Sudans. The OAU principles of national sovereignty, maintenance of existing borders, and no interference in the internal affairs of countries, while striving for continental anti-Imperialist unity, were the correct principles.



## BRICS and FOCAC

The OAU was converted into the AU so as to extend the “Washington Consensus” over Africa, and institutionalise neo-colonialism in Africa. But this did not mean the end of the road for the anti-Imperialist struggle in Africa.

Imperialism exposed its intentions in a way that was clear for all to see, especially in Libya, and after that again, in the Ukraine and in Syria. The Imperialists even began to goad and to provoke the largest of the countries that are independent of it, Russia and China, with military threats and with sanctions, which are acts of war, and not acts of diplomacy. This marks the dangerous re-emergence of open colonialism.

At the same time, independent countries that wish to resist the hegemony of the Imperialists have begun to create new forms of organisation and institutions for mutual support. They have no choice, because it is the stated policy of the USA not to allow the development of any power that could evade its global dominance.

The US doctrine means that any independent country, large or small, must be reduced to the point where it is taking instructions from Washington, or else be “bombed back to the stone age”. From the historical record since the 1940s, it would even appear to be the case that destruction, and not just political subordination, is the USA’s preferred option. Theirs is the politics of the “dog in the manger”. To execute it, they have created the arrogant military structure called “US AFRICOM”.

Hence by necessity, in these circumstances, the BRICS and the FOCAC have been created. BRICS is Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. FOCAC is the Forum on Co-operation between China and Africa. These are organisations for peaceful mutual development, trade and investment.



BRICS

We celebrate Africa Day so as to remember the strategic liberation struggle that began nearly six hundred years ago, when the Portuguese caravelles first gained the ability to pass the desert by sea, in 1434, and began at once to plunder and to enslave the people of Africa.

We do so in the knowledge that the struggle must continue. African Unity remains the goal and the means to stand up to, and to out-last, Imperialism. The ultimate goal is freedom.



African Countries (Wikipedia)



FOCAC: 54 African Countries and China

# African Countries

<u>Independent Countries:</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>GDP: \$bn</u>	<u>Independent Countries:</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>GDP: \$bn</u>
<a href="#">Algeria</a>	39 500 000	\$ 227.802	<a href="#">Libya</a>	6 244 174	\$ 92.875
<a href="#">Angola</a>	24 383 301	\$ 139.059	<a href="#">Madagascar</a>	22 434 363	\$ 33.642
<a href="#">Benin</a>	10 323 000	\$ 15.586	<a href="#">Malawi</a>	16 407 000	\$ 14.265
<a href="#">Botswana</a>	2 155 784	\$ 17.222	<a href="#">Mali</a>	14 517 176	\$ 17.983
<a href="#">Burkina Faso</a>	17 322 796	\$ 28.000	<a href="#">Mauritania</a>	3 537 368	\$ 8.286
<a href="#">Burundi</a>	10 395 931	\$ 8.378	<a href="#">Mauritius</a>	1 261 208	\$ 23.322
<a href="#">Cameroon</a>	22 534 532	\$ 67.225	<a href="#">Morocco</a>	33 848 242	\$ 274.530
<a href="#">Cape Verde</a>	525 000	\$ 2.305	<a href="#">Mozambique</a>	24 692 144	\$ 26.257
<a href="#">CAR</a>	4 709 000	\$ 2.574	<a href="#">Namibia</a>	2 113 077	\$ 18.800
<a href="#">Chad</a>	10 329 208	\$ 31.448	<a href="#">Niger</a>	17 138 707	\$ 11.632
<a href="#">Comores</a>	798 000	\$ 0.919	<a href="#">Nigeria</a>	182 202 000	\$ 1 109.000
<a href="#">Congo DR</a>	81 680 000	\$ 61.579	<a href="#">Rwanda</a>	11 262 564	\$ 20.343
<a href="#">Congo Republic</a>	4 662 446	\$ 21.992	<a href="#">São Tomé/Príncipe</a>	190 428	\$ 0.402
<a href="#">Côte d'Ivoire</a>	23 919 000	\$ 48.000	<a href="#">Senegal</a>	13 567 338	\$ 26.574
<a href="#">Djibouti</a>	810 178	\$ 2.700	<a href="#">Seychelles</a>	92 000	\$ 2.304
<a href="#">Egypt</a>	89 995 000	\$ 989.886	<a href="#">Sierra Leone</a>	6 190 280	\$ 8.276
<a href="#">Equatorial Guinea</a>	722 254	\$ 19.286	<a href="#">Somalia</a>	10 428 043	\$ 5.896
<a href="#">Eritrea</a>	6 380 803	\$ 7.814	<a href="#">South Africa</a>	54 956 900	\$ 725.004
<a href="#">Ethiopia</a>	85 237 338	\$ 30.599	<a href="#">South Sudan</a>	12 340 000	\$ 23.546
<a href="#">Gabon</a>	1 475 000	\$ 32.682	<a href="#">Sudan</a>	40 235 000	\$ 159.500
<a href="#">Gambia</a>	1 882 450	\$ 3.403	<a href="#">Swaziland</a>	1 119 000	\$ 10.869
<a href="#">Ghana</a>	27 000 000	\$ 148.599	<a href="#">Tanzania</a>	50 760 000	\$ 127.690
<a href="#">Guinea</a>	8 746 128	\$ 11.464	<a href="#">Togo</a>	7 154 237	\$ 6.910
<a href="#">Guinea Bissau</a>	1 693 398	\$ 2.502	<a href="#">Tunisia</a>	10 982 754	\$ 129.140
<a href="#">Kenya</a>	45 010 056	\$ 142.742	<a href="#">Uganda</a>	37 873 253	\$ 50.439
<a href="#">Lesotho</a>	2 067 000	\$ 4.277	<a href="#">Zambia</a>	16 212 000	\$ 61.786
<a href="#">Liberia</a>	4 503 000	\$ 6.753	<a href="#">Zimbabwe</a>	12 973 808	\$ 28.149
<b><u>Totals (54 countries):</u></b>			<b><u>1 139 493 667 \$ 5 092.216</u></b>		

## Colonies (by Colonial Powers)

<a href="#">Britain</a>	5 436	No data	<a href="#">Ascension, St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha</a>
<a href="#">Spain</a>	2 277 519	No data	<a href="#">Canaries, Ceuta, Melilla</a>
<a href="#">Portugal</a>	267 785	No data	<a href="#">Madeira</a>
<a href="#">France</a>	1 057 639	\$ 24.600	<a href="#">Réunion, Mayotte</a>
<a href="#">Morocco</a>	548 000	No data	<a href="#">Western Sahara</a>
<hr/>			
	4 424 164	\$ 24.600	
<hr/>			

	<u>Population</u>	<u>GDP: \$bn</u>
<b><u>Africa Totals:</u></b>	1 143 917 831	\$ 5 116.816
<b><u>Approximately:</u></b>	<b>1.2 billion people</b>	<b>5 trillion dollars</b>

Compiled by author from data in Wikipedia, December 2015